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Week 5

ELT 310 School Experience

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TEACHING METHODS

The task for the 5th week was assigned to observe teaching methods in teaching English. To make a list of the observed techniques that were demonstrated during the classes and to state the durations of activities were required. Moreover, not only techniques were the aim but also the perceptions of students towards these techniques were on the focal point. During the observation, it was required to monitor if the activities are done in a formal sequence or if the teachers have peculiar teaching strategies no matter which classroom they are in.

Before mentioning about the experience during the lessons, it is essential to emphasize one point from the perception of teaching methods. It is impossible to teach different aspects of the language sticking on only one method (Nunan, 1999 as cited in Pacek, 2003). That is why it is crucial to have an eclectic approach in classrooms.

Moreover, it is crucial to state what is required in Turkish laws from the teacher. According to Resmi Gazete (1973), a teacher should benefit from teaching methods. As it is said in 2.2.2, a teacher should benefit from different techniques and as in 2.2.1, a teacher should use techniques in accordance with the students' proficiency level and their age.

Meltem İyisan started teaching with a revision asking students what they remembered from the previous lesson. None of the students could recall anything from the previous lesson.

After that, she gave the name of the last topic as a hint. “Do you remember that it was about house? Don’t you remember anything from that?” The class was down in silence. Then she told the title of the topic, “The things around the house”. The scene seems pretty promising, and it seems as a legit lesson and revision. However, she was not speaking in English. She was using only the mother tongue. Usage of the mother tongue in English classrooms should be kept minimally and should be limited as much as possible to facilitate English (Shabir, 2017). Whereas, it was not the case in Meltem İyisan’s classroom.

Students were 100% happy from the situation that their English teacher was not speaking English at all, judging from their desire to know Turkish counterpart of the words when she uttered one. It is even impossible to say she is using Grammar Translation Method. There was no explicit formulated grammar teaching in the lesson.

When she wanted to teach students about the location of things in the house and how to ask questions about it, she wrote them on the board (see Picture A). She asked the students to answer the questions she had written on the black board while the video was playing on the smart board,. Of course, the meanings of the prepositions were given by the teacher on the side of the board.

She did not demonstrate how the prepositions could be used. A possible demonstration could be (as in TPR); taking the table at the middle of the classroom and putting various objects which are previously introduced to the kids, and uttering the sentences like “ the ruler is on the table”, “ the bag is under the table” and “we are in the classroom” (Asher, 1969).

Some structural items presented through dialogues are practiced by the use of repetition, memorization, and pattern drills in Audio Lingual Method. (Sarıçoban, n.d). Repetition drills were done in order to teach the students the pronunciation and to make them memorize the structure of patterns. Thus, Meltem İyisan was using repetition drills while she was teaching how to ask where the object is and also how to answer it. Looking to repetition

drills from the perspective of parroting, it can be assumed that repetition drills has no effect on fluency or accuracy as it was observed later that most of the students did not know how to ask the place of the object.

Sibel Tuna's class was observed on the same day by the ELT 310 school experience course takers. However, it was impossible to decide which techniques she used in her classroom because she was not spotted while trying to teach anything. She was confused, unprepared, and unorganized. Obviously she did not have any preparation before the lesson. This might be due to the fact that maybe she has the burnout syndrome. She did not know what to teach, what she had taught in the previous lesson, or what she had to teach at that moment. She was trying to write something on the board, and then she was leaving it, in one moment she was telling students that she would check their homework in another moment, she was starting to read what she wrote on the board.

She was not carrying the proper features to be eligible to teach. She did not have enough field knowledge as required in Turkish Law. It is stated that a teacher should have information about the field (concept, notion, theories, hypothesis, generalization etc.) and to have the knowledge to process information for students (technique, method, etc.). Also in the same article about planning course it is stated that; a teacher should be able to clearly state the aim, to be able to plan the course according to the desired behavior that wants to be acquired by students (Resmi Gazete , 1973). Unfortunately, none of that could be observed.

Overall, my observations indicated that, most of the teachers that I observed in the government school are indeed not doing what Turkish laws required. They are not fit for the position. Moreover, they do not have enough field knowledge and also pedagogical knowledge.

References:

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Appendix

Picture A: Example sentences for exercise.

